CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for exchanging information over a communications network, the method comprising:

connecting at least two clients to a proxy over the communications network;

activating a shared session between the at least two clients; and

enabling co-navigation of at least one web document with dynamic content by the at least two clients during the shared session.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least two clients include at least one customer and at least one company representative.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein connecting the at least two clients to the proxy includes receiving a message from any of the at least two clients, the message indicating a willingness to begin the shared session.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein activating the shared session between the at least two clients further includes:

collecting client state information; and

synchronizing browsers of the at least two clients using the client state information.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the client state information includes a client cookie, an Internet address of a current web document displayed to a client, and relevant information from the current web document.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein any of the at least two clients is behind a firewall.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein enabling the at least two clients to co-navigate includes:

presenting a web document retrieved from a web site to the at least two clients; and

submitting responses received from any of the at least two clients to the web site.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein presenting the web document further includes:

retrieving the web document from the web site;

modifying the web document; and

delivering the modified web document to the at least two clients.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein modifying the requested web document includes:

identifying a dynamic event in the web document; and

replacing a link directing the dynamic event to the web site with a link or code directing the dynamic event to the proxy.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein modifying the requested web document includes incorporating at least one business rule into the web document when the at least one business rule applies to the web document.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein modifying the requested web document includes replaces all references to a top frame in the web document with a code referencing a frame which would be the top window had the web document not been loaded in a co-navigation session.

12. The method of claim 9 wherein submitting responses further includes:

receiving a web response from any of the at least two clients;

converting the web response to a web request; and

transferring the web request to the web site.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein co-navigating includes jointly completing a web form by the at least two clients.

14. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

a first client specifying an object on a web document displayed to the first client during the shared session; and

displaying the object on a web document displayed to a second client.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising scrolling the web document displayed to the second client to a portion of the web document that includes the object.

16. The method of claim 1 further comprising selectively restricting web features from any of the at least two clients during the shared session.

17. The method of claim 1 further comprising selectively enabling web features from any of the at least two clients during the shared session.

18. The method of claim 1 further comprising selectively blocking personal information of a first client from a second client during the shared session.

19. The method of claim 1 wherein co-navigation is performed in a secure manner.

20. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing going back and forward functionality during the shared session.

21. The method of claim 1 wherein any of the at least two clients are connected to the proxy via a wireless carrier.

22. A method for jointly completing a web form by participants of a shared session, the method comprising:

monitoring data entered into the web form by at least two participants of the shared session;

detecting a change of data entered into the web form by one of the at least two participants; and

reflecting said change of date in the web form displayed to the rest of the at least two participants.

23. A method for conducting a shared session, the method comprising:

maintaining a set of business rules concerning information displayed to a plurality of clients;

receiving a request for a shared session between at least two participants, the request for the shared session pertaining to a web document;

modifying the web document in accordance with the set of business rules; and

providing co-navigation of the modified web document to the at least two participants.

24. A system for exchanging information over a communications network, the system comprising:

a first client device, connected to the communications network;

a second client device, connected to the communications network, to issue a message indicating a willingness to begin a shared session; and

a co-navigation service, connected to the communications network, to receive the message from the second client device, to activate the shared session between at least a user of the first client device and a user of the second client device, and to enable co-navigation of at least one web document with dynamic content by at least the user of the first client device and the user of the second client device during the shared session.

25. The system of claim 24 wherein the user of the first client device is a company representative, and the user of the second client device is a customer.

26. The system of claim 24 wherein each of the first client device and the second client device comprises:

an applet to establish connection with the co-navigation service; and

a shared browser to present the at least one web document to a user.

27. The system of claim 24 wherein the co-navigation service comprises:

a routing server to manage web requests, load balancing and routing;

at least one application server to maintain a plurality of shared sessions; and

a database server to authenticate participants of the plurality of shared sessions and store information related to each of the plurality of shared sessions.

28. The system of claim 27 wherein each application server includes:

communication drivers to maintain connection between the application server and each of a plurality of client devices during a corresponding shared session;

a session manager to establish and coordinate the plurality of shared sessions;

a web server to transfer requests from the co-navigation service to corresponding client devices;

a co-navigation engine to provide co-navigation functionality during the shared session; and

at least one server integration application programming interface (API) to provide an interface between the co-navigation service and at least one third party system.

29. The system of claim 28 wherein the co-navigation engine further includes:

a parsing and lexing engine to retrieve web documents from a web site, to prepare the web documents for display to corresponding participants of the shared session, and to submit responses received from any of the participants to a web site;

a business rule engine to maintain a plurality of predefined business rules pertaining to co-navigation, the plurality of predefined business rules being used in preparing the web documents for display during the shared session;

a shared state manager to maintain state information during the shared session; and

a pseudo client to retrieve web documents from web sites and to send requests to the web sites.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein the parsing and lexing engine is capable of identifying every dynamic event in the web document, replacing links directing dynamic events to the web site with links directing the dynamic events to the proxy, and modifying the web document according to predefined business rules.

31. The system of claim 29 wherein the co-navigation engine is configured to provide joint completion of a web form by participants of the shared session.

32. The system of claim 24 wherein co-navigation is performed in a secure manner.

33. The system of claim 24 wherein any of the client devices are connected to the co-navigation service via a wireless carrier.

34. A computer readable medium comprising instructions, which when executed on a processor, perform a method for exchanging information over a communications network, the method comprising:

connecting at least two clients to a proxy over the communications network;

activating a shared session between the at least two clients; and

enabling co-navigation of at least one web document with dynamic content by the at least two clients during the shared session.